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ABSTRACT

This profile in outline form of the English language teaching situation in Indonesia attributes the great demand for English to the economic advantages that accompany proficiency in English and to its role in business. English is not used as the medium of instruction except in English departments in tertiary education and in certain specialized training institutions, though it is compulsory as a second language in all secondary schools. The time allotted to it is outlined, and the examinations, syllabi, textbooks, and teaching materials for the junior and senior high school and tertiary levels are discussed. The make-up of the teaching cadre and teacher training are also described, as well as the various forms of British and American support for the teaching of English. A general statement concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the situation states that the lack of printed materials, low salaries, poor teacher training, and poor physical conditions of the schools are disadvantages that hinder progress. Skilled and dedicated teachers at all levels, economic improvement and an awareness of the need for English language teaching are advantages, however. The profile concludes with brief mention of current research. (CLK)

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ENGLISH TEACHING INFORMATION CENTRE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Country: INDONESIA

JUNE 1975

1. Role of English

1.1 There is an insatiable demand for English, for these reasons:

1.1.1 It confers large economic advantages. (A stenographer for English can easily earn several times the salary of a government servant or a teacher.)

1.1.2 It is the main channel for essential inputs from outside into national development, including the vital study/research assignments overseas.

1.1.3 It is essential (though often very inadequately learnt) in higher education, where at least 75% of printed materials are in English.

1.1.4 It is commonly used in certain sectors of business - foreign company operations and in the few large locally based concerns.

1.1.5 It is vital for the tourist industry - an important and rapidly expanding source of foreign currency.

1.2 The demand for English teaching after the end of formal education is increased by the generally very low levels of teaching within the formal education structure.

1.3 English is not used as the medium of instruction except in English departments in tertiary education and certain specialised training institutions. Reading skills at this level are, however, vital (see 1.1.3) in almost all subject areas, especially medicine, the sciences, engineering and technology.

1.4 Apart from 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 above, English is rarely used as a medium of communication, the national and - to a lesser extent - the regional languages being available for this purpose. (Recently among the 40+ generation, there has been a tendency to revert to the use of Dutch, which was, of course, the normal medium up to 15 or 20 years ago. Some social cachet now appears to attach to Dutch, especially in the feminine half of Jakarta society.)

2. English within the Education System

2.1 English is officially described as "the first foreign language" and is compulsory in all secondary schools. The time allotted to it is:

2.1.1 Primary schools: nil

2.1.2 Junior Secondary schools (JHS) 3 years: 4 x 40 mins reducing to 3 x 40 mins.

2.1.3 Senior Secondary Schools (SHS) 3 years: 3 x 40 mins, but only 2 x 40 mins in streams concentrating on sciences. (sic!)

Footnote: A new experimental pattern of secondary education has been introduced in some centres. In the Sekolah Pembangunan - or development schools, as these are called - English teaching starts in the fifth year and continues through the twelfth.

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2.1.4 Tertiary Education. The general pattern, from which there are many variations, is for English to be taught for 2 hours weekly for the first two semesters.

2.2 A formal distinction between teaching English language and teaching English literature is made only in English departments of tertiary institutions, usually not until Year 2 or 3.

2.3 Examinations. Examinations are conducted regionally at the end of the Junior High School and Senior High School. The examinations require little active productive skill and it is possible for a candidate to pass with little or no ability to speak or write English - or even to read it. Examinations at tertiary level are too variable to summarise. English is not a required subject (normally) in the entrance examinations which each university sets, but the university will, of course, take note of the SHS examination results, in which English is compulsory.

2.4 Syllabuses and textbooks. There exist detailed centrally compiled syllabuses for English at JHS and SHS level. These are structure based and in their day (mid-50s) were ahead of those of most other countries. Unfortunately, very few schools have ever seen them, and they have served chiefly the main purpose for which they were created ie to act as guidelines for the Ministry/Ford Foundation textbook writing project. The history of the project from its inception in 1957 cannot possibly be summarised here (consult ETIC archives), but the present results are:

2.4.1 The JHS books were completed in 1962 and printed.

2.4.2 But few of these books ever reached the schools, and Book 3 was printed without the team being allowed to proof-read it. (The mean number of errors per page is estimated at 15.)

2.4.3 The books have now been reprinted and distributed to government schools. In the outer regions however, supplies are insufficient for all pupils to possess a book.

2.4.4 The materials include teachers' guides, wall charts, flash cards, other visual aids, and supplementary comprehension material.

2.4.5 The writing of the SHS materials began again, after a long hiatus, in 1967, and made only slow progress. The materials. hastily revised, were published in 1972 and distributed.

2.4.6 Like the JHS, very few SHS students have any textbooks (for any subject, that is), though in some of the main centres a few local commercially published materials may occasionally be seen.

2.5 Because of the above, the Ministry, though it has full theoretical power to prescribe textbooks, is unable to contemplate prescription in practice, and a variety of locally produced textbooks compete with the Ministry materials.

2.5.1 A new draft syllabus has now been produced and writing of new course books is to begin next year, to be followed by "upgrading courses" to familiarise teachers with the new materials.

2.6 At tertiary level, institutions are free to decide their own syllabuses and book selections. In practice, syllabuses tend to be much the same (to be described, perhaps, as unimaginatively early 50s Michigan), and books are desperately scarce.

2.7 The English Inspectorate no longer exists, nor does the former English Language Coordinating Committee of the Ministry. The English Language Project is mainly concerned with the textbook project, and in any case ranks quite low in the Ministry's hierarchy. Inspectorates are regionally organised, do not normally boast subject inspectors, are allocated the most miniscule travelling funds and are mainly concerned with administrative overview.

2.8 Some tertiary institutions attempt to teach English for special purposes, but can rarely achieve more than lip service to the idea. Some institutions have set up or are in process of setting up English Language Service Depts to cater for the needs of students and staff. Language Centres based on Universities and IKIP's have now been functioning under loose control by the National Language Centre for about three years. The primary function of these is to give intensive English courses to academic staff and government officials as a preparation for overseas training. For various reasons - chiefly the difficulty of getting departments to release staff for three months at a time - the intensive courses have been poorly attended and a variety of less intensive courses has been developed. These centres have been supported by the US government by the attachment of Fulbright lecturers with TEFL qualifications but in general these lectures have not been used to the full or at the appropriate level. The National Language Centre has now been established, and its Director Dr Amran Halim appointed. This will have responsibility for coordination, research and evaluation in relation to language policy, development and teaching. In 1976 it will cease to have control of the local language centres, which will be absorbed into the institutions which house them, either as language institutes directly responsible to the Rektor, or as extensions of the English Dept within the Faculty of Letters. All state tertiary institutions now have language laboratories but lack materials for use in them.

2.9 There is not much official provision for the teaching of English to adults (what there is is mainly in Ministries), but there are very large numbers of private language schools. Most are very poor, but a few (mainly in Makarta and Bandung) are quite good. Almost certainly more than half of the schools' teachers of English supplement their incomes by teaching adult classes.

3. Teaching Cadre

This is an immensley difficult area to comment on, since even the Ministry has no really reliable figures from which to start. It is even difficult to define "a teacher of English" because no teacher can possibly live on his salary, all are forced to take extra jobs. The same teacher may be teaching in, say, three JHS and one SHS at the same time. Does he count as one or four?

3.1 There are very few expatriate staff at any level, and those that exist are almost entirely in tertiary education. It is doubtful the number of expatriates teaching English full-time comes to more than 50, though there would be others giving part-time help.

3.2 The percentage of (all) teachers in secondary schools said to be fully trained by Indonesian standards is Junior High School 10-15%, SHS 50%. It is probable, but impossible to confirm, that the figure for teachers of English is about the same. Even so, it is doubtful if the Indonesian MEd equivalent, much less the BEd equivalent, represents anything that we would regard as adequate training. Some secondary teachers of English have received overseas training, approximately 200 on the 1 year courses at ELT, Wellington, NZ and Indonesia makes good use of the training facilities of the Regional English Language Centre in Singapore.

3.3 There is also a significant number of tertiary level lecturers who have had training overseas in TEFL, Applied Linguistics or Linguistics. Training has been provided in USA, Britain, New Zealand and Australia. The American qualifications include some very respectable PhDs and most of the holders of these are concentrated in the English Department of the IKIP (see 3.4 below) at Malang. There has been a tendency to build up English Departments in certain selected institutions to the neglect of others. Thus some institutions of higher education may have 10 or 15 lecturers with overseas training while others have none. There is now a tendency to disperse such training more widely, both on the part of the government and the donor agencies, though certain institutions designated as feeder institutions still have the larger share.

3.4 In teacher training as in other areas, there is considerable conflict between the theoretical and actual. The theoretical pyramid is:

IKIP (5 years University status course) - trains teachers for SHS

IKIP (3 years University status course) - trains teachers for JHS

PGSLP (2 years post SHS course) - trains teachers for JHS

SPG (SHS normal school) - trains teachers for primary schools

In reality, many JHS teachers have only SPG qualifications, many SHS teachers come from PGSLP, and some IKIPs have so few MEd graduates for English that all they do is to maintain or reinforce their own staff. At all levels the training provided is poor, largely consists of lectures, and has little provision for practice teaching.

3.5 A few local organisations of teachers of English exist, but their activities and influence are slight. At Yogyakarta a teacher's journal was produced for about three years by a small group of enthusiasts, but with transfer of the two main movers to Jakarta the journal seems to have lapsed.

4. Teaching Materials

These are totally inadequate at all levels and in all institutions, except where the Council, Ford Foundation, USIS etc have provided the necessary support for their ELT personnel. This deliberately blanket statement applies to all types of materials: books, supplementary readers, library books, journals, teaching aids, charts, tapes, films, film strips, and - in other subject areas - laboratory equipment, craft tools and materials etc. The normal Indonesian classroom contains 50-60 students in parallel rows of desks, listening to a teacher talking and occasionally putting a few words on the blackboard.

4.1 For local projects for producing teaching materials, see 2.4 to 2.6 above.

4.2 A competing, commercially published, set of JHS materials does exist, written to a slightly different (earlier) version of the syllabus used for the Ministry/Ford materials. This is Professor Pasaribu's "Open Road to Excellent English". It is competent enough, has Ministry approval, and can still be found in many schools especially in Jakarta and West Java. The Ministry has recently approved a somewhat hastily adapted version of D H Howe's "Active English for Malaysians" OUP, and this has been adapted by some Jakarta schools. A team working under Professor Pasaribu at the Jakarta Development School is in process of publishing its course under the title of "Another Way to Good English".

5. English Outside the Educational System

See 2.9. Private language schools are so widespread that little useful generalisation is possible.

5.1 The best private organisation in Jakarta is the LPPM (Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pembinaan Management), which provides mainly for the business world. It charges high fees, and has correspondingly good staff.

6. British Support for the Teaching of English

a. i. Council Staff - 3
ii. Contract Teachers - 2 (one post unfilled May 1975)
iii. VSOs - 20

b. i. Posts held by Council Staff:
ELO
Senior Lecturer - IKIP Bandung
English Language Consultant - National Language Centre
ii. Posts held by Contract Teachers:
Senior Lecturer IKIP Medan
Director Staff English Language Training Unit,
Universitas Gadjah Mada

c. ELT activities of British Staff include direct teaching of IKIP students, teacher training, materials production, advisory services, TV and radio.

d. ELT book exhibitions were shown in 1971 and 1973. Permanent reference displays of ELT books are held at the Council Centre in Jakarta and Bandung.

e. British Staff use British books, tapes, films etc. A few British books are in widespread use eg those of L A Hill and W Stannard Allen (the latter sometimes in pirated editions). More recent British materials are not widely known but are becoming available - in particular L G Alexander's "New Concept English", the Penguin Success with English and the simplified readers of British publishers. The BBC/British Council film series Slim John, Water & Connie and Walter & Connie Reporting have had several showings on TV locally, and BBC ELT radio programmes are widely used. The BBC British Council film "The Bellcrest Story" has been shown on TV in Jakarta. TVRT has acquired showing rights for "People You Meet" and is negotiating for further series.

f. A limited programme of teaching has recently been begun in the British Council Centre for special groups.

7. American Support for the Teaching of English

With some gaps, this has been given almost since Independence. The main agencies are Ford Foundation, USIS and USAID.

7.1 Ford has a long history of support, but has reduced its commitment in recent years.

7.1.1 The present commitment is mainly centred on IKIP Malang - a domestic fellowship scheme to finance teachers from all over Indonesia through the postgraduate course in English and, until August 1971, the provision of an ELT Consultant.

7.1.2 Ford also bore the main burden of the materials production project (2.4 to 2.6 above) but finally withdrew its consultant in April 1970.

7.1.3 Ford sponsored, 1967-70, fifteen 6-week up-grading courses for JHS teachers of English. c1400 teachers attended and at least eight of the courses were outside Java.

Ford is now giving limited support which includes, provision of equipment, consultancy services and staff training to the National Language Centre.

7.2 USIS assistance takes two main forms.

7.2.1 Bi-national centres in Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan.

7.2.2 Provision of "Fulbright Teachers" to the National Language Centre and 5 regional centres.

7.3 USAID's contribution is mainly scholarships and some often highly irrelevant book presentations.

7.4 A few Americans teach English under the Volunteers in Asia programme.

7.5 Mention should be made of the NZ assistance to IKIP Yogyakarta - 2 staff, books and other printed materials. See also 3.2 and 3.3

7.6 Australia does not give much direct assistance to ELT within Indonesia, having preferred to concentrate study and research opportunities in Australia. However, plans are going ahead for the establishment of a cultural centre which will provide some teaching. ABC provides radio lessons which are widely listened to.

7.7 Anglo-American Cooperation is informal, usually close, and generally productive. Examples are:

7.7.1 Ford and Council rarely take any important initiative without mutual consultation.

7.7.2 USIS asks Council to assist in briefing its Fulbright teachers, and also asked Council advice about their original locations.

7.7.3 Both Ford and USIS staff have worked as instructors at Council initiated courses and workshops.

7.7.4 Council officers have instructed at in-service courses for USIS Bi-national Centre local teachers.

7.7.5 The Canadian government has promised assistance, including a consultant to the National Language Centre.

8. General Statement

There are a number of obvious weaknesses:

8.1 The almost complete absence of printed materials.

8.2 The abysmal salaries.

8.3 Inadequate and poorly conceived pre- and in-service training.

8.4 Poor physical conditions and very large classes in schools.

8.5 An administrative and promotional structure which tends to block rather than promote reform.

But, perhaps surprisingly, there are also some advantages, and these have become much more marked from 1970 onwards:

8.6 There is a significant number of skilled, dedicated teachers at all levels.

8.7 There is a growing awareness, especially in powerful sections of the government machine, of the vital need for improved ELT.

8.8 The eventual but inevitable effects of the marked economic recovery since 1968.

8.9 An apparent facility for language learning among Indonesians generally.

8.10 A small but impressive cadre of specialists who, given a reformed educational structure resulting from 8.7 and 8.8, could make really effective use of foreign and domestic inputs.

9. Current Research and Bibliography

In domestic projects so far there has been little breadth, depth or important findings.

9.1 Most domestic projects are still usually one-man efforts, largely derivative, and carried out by candidates for IKIP MEd degrees. Phonological comparisons between English and regional languages are common and sterotyped.

9.2 IKIP Malang is trying to set up standardised achievement tests at secondary levels, but is badly handicapped by lack of money.

9.3 Some earlier investigations were assisted by Ford, but few have any great current relevance.